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WHEN once a Custom is thoroughly establish'd; when great Men have vouchsafed to follow it, and when the World, with how little Justice soever, have thought fit to come into it; it becomes like a Law of the Medes and Persians, irresistible, and irrevocable. It is to this that *Bull-Feasts* remain still in fashion in the North; that Troops of Foot crowd up a *Dutch Stage*; that *Harlequin's* patched Coat is thought to have Humour and Wit in it; and the Garb and Belly of *Punch* is a leading Jest in Old England. When the Eyes of a People have been used to a Thing, they expect it, and never unreasonably and ridiculous. A Farce after a Tragedy is now no more to be paried with, than a Clutter from a Lord-Mayor's Feast; because what Play nor Entertainment would go down with the People. I have seen a Dissertation upon *Skinner's* Law, which by proving the Thing of great Antiquity, would have infer'd its being rational: And I know there are some Poets in the World, who will never let the Rights of the City of London fall, till the Custom of Riding be reviv'd at my Lord-Mayor's Feast. Such Power has Precedent! Such the Authority of Antiquity! And, give me Leave to add, the Humour of the Moderns! I have been led to these Observations by remarking, that a Swaggering Knight and Simple Squire has been a standing piece since the Days of *Cervantes*, who first produced *Quixotte* and *Sancho Pancho*.

The Immortal Butler, who improved rather than spoil'd the Spanish Romance, and by accommodating the Times and his Country made it truly an Original, no sooner fix'd on a Sir *Hudibras*, than he set him *Squire Ralph*. The Authors of *Bartley's Fair* presently took the Hint; and there has been a Farce acted these Fifty Years, but has a wrong-headed Master, and a soft-headed Man. Moved by the Authority of this establish'd Tale, Captain *Hercules Vinograd*, had scarce set up for *Champion*, before (in the Style of Butler) he made a piece of a *Ralph*, who has served him in Quality of Buffoon ever since. I once, indeed, heard a Critick say, after reading some Paragraphs of *Hercules*, *Will back'd Cerberus!* Upon asking him what meant; *Why*, says he, *don't you remember that Hercules brought that Dog from Hell?* After all, no Mountain ever set up without his *Merry Andrew*; and therefore our Sir *Hudibras*, being determin'd to go a Monelling, he was in Decency oblig'd to have a *Ralph* in his Train, and the World must agree that he has made a worthy Choice.

To have been oblig'd to write thrice a Week a *Trick* of Scurrility and Politicks, and at the same time to have burlesqued the Daily Occurrences, would have been a Task too hard for *Hercules* himself; on this Occasion, therefore, he judiciously introduced a Second to take the *Augean Stable*, and clear his Adventures off his Hands. In this Capacity the Man has behaved well; nor is there a Reader of Town who allows the Captain to be a *Champion*, who admits at the same Time that our *Ralph* is an excellent Scavenger: And if he does not toss about with Majesty, he at least does it plentifully, with a good Will; and without Respect of Persons. And how, considering the dirty Cause he is engag'd in, can any Man expect more?

Since the War carried on by the Opposition, not only against the Administration but the Constitution, Multitude of daring Fellows have appear'd; but the *Champion*, with his Club and his Cub, has out-run them all. The rest had, for Decency sake, Reason now and then to History and Argument, that they might seem to have Reason on their Side, and write from some Sort of Principle; but Captain *Hercules* is above all this, and as he has taken a Bear-Garden Title, he makes use of Bear-Garden Behaviour. He has, however, been guilty of one Solecism even in Bear-Garden Decorum; for whereas at all other Stages but his, the *Rabble break Heads* for him before the Masters mount, he shews away first at *Harper*, and the *Gudgel Scene* comes after. What Effect this will have upon his Brethren, and whether

we shall see any Alteration in the next Advertisement from *Tottenham Court*, Time, the great Discoverer of Secrets, must inform us.

The Reader will certainly wonder at seeing this Sort of Language in this Paper. To plead repeated Provocations, would be, in my Opinion, to prevaricate; I will therefore tell the Truth; which is, that despairing to be understood in any other Language by the Gentlemen I speak to, I was constrain'd to have Recourse to this; which, without Doubt, they understand. It might be expected that I should take Notice of the Impropriety of their reflecting on other People's Mercenaries, who are themselves known to write for Subsistence. But this is in the Way of their Trade; for all the Champions I have hitherto heard of, do not fight, as the Mob phrase it, for *Love*, but for *Pride* and the House: And to reproach a Man for his Vocation, shews at once Want of Sense and Want of Manners. The Integrity too of writing against a Ministry is a mighty Matter; especially too after they had written for that Ministry, or, at least, gave out that they had written for it, and were not displeased even at having other People's Labours ascribed to them. But all such little Spots are wash'd out in the Pool of Patriotism, and he who will but take upon him to trouble the People, is esteem'd to be whole and sound, tho' he should be both lame and blind! These are the Privileges of the Opposition, its Privileges, to which all its Writers have an unquestion'd Title; and who dares dispute it, shall be summon'd before the People.

The polite Author of *Common Sense* was pleas'd not long ago to bestow a small Chastisement on me for the Pains I took in examining the Life and Conduct of the illustrious *Cecil Lord Burleigh*. I own that I never did any thing which gave me greater Pleasure; and, let him call it Vanity or what he will, I am persuaded there was some Merit in it, because it has made himself, and his Elder Brother *Caleb* so angry. Nothing could be easier than for me to justify myself upon this Subject. The Reign of *Elizabeth* is a Reign which all Parties affect to applaud, and *Cecil* a Minister whom on the same Account all Parties commend. Nothing therefore could be more natural than to enquire, How far that Government agreed with this; How far the Conduct of *Cecil* resembled that of the present Ministers. How far I succeeded in this, the Publick was to judge, and it is still in a Capacity of judging, the Papers upon that Subject being collected into a Volume, and sold by the Publisher of this Paper. To this therefore I refer, and I persuade myself, that whoever reads it will be convinc'd, that how faint soever the Comparison may be, it is far from being groundless. Nor do I despair of adding somewhat to this Piece which will give it still a greater Likeness. But more of this in its Season.

It seems to be a Sort of Insolence not to take no Ice of what one's Opponents say; and this is the sole Reason that I sometimes write a Paper of this Sort. For, to suppose that the *Craftsman* is to be convinc'd by Argument, that Reason would convert *Common Sense*, or that true Humour and genteel Satire should have any Effect upon the *Champion*, would be Vapours at least, if not Madness. All who read the Publick Papers see the Manner in which they treat their Adversaries, and are well apprized why they treat them so, because it frees them from the Labour of confuting, and delivers them from the Company of that Foe to the Opposition, *unsophisticated Reason*. To ridicule an Administration, to call great Men Names, and to raise a Spirit of Rebellion against too mild a Prince, are easy Things, which the weakest as well as the worst of Men have practis'd in all Ages. But to write directly on Points of Government, to give the People just Notions of Liberty, and to canvass the Conduct of Ministers, are Tasks of another Size. A Man who writes a *Pasquin* may not be able to write a *Freeholder*, but a Man who has Malice enough to set a House on fire, may, with the Assistance of ill Fortune, burn down a great City. To say the truth, the Publick at this time can have no Hopes, but in the Incapacity of the Malecontents; for they have shewn such an inexhausted Fund of Envy, and such an outrageous Spirit of Wickedness, that whatever is terrible, and within the Compass of their Power, we need not doubt will be brought upon us.

The Conduct of the Ministry in this respect has

been, as well as in most others, directly opposite to theirs. They wisely consider'd, that to foment the Divisions amongst us by the Application of sharp Remedies would be a very improper Measure, while we are engag'd in a War abroad, wherein our Honour and Trade are so deeply engag'd, and on which all Europe looks with Attention. They chose rather to suffer any personal Indignities, to bear with any Scurrilities, to pass by the grossest Affronts, and to allow the basest as well as falsest Suggestions to pass unheeded, rather than to perplex Publick Affairs in such a critical Situation, with State Prosecutions. They know that their Conduct is properly cognizable in Parliament; and the sincere Regard They have for the People's Liberties hinders them from taking notice of those Appeals made to them by their great Enemies; Men who were never known to fail in flattering them when out, or in oppressing them when in Power.

R. FREEMAN.

FOREIGN PORTS.

Essex, Sept. 10. N. S. Since my last came in the Ships commanded by the following Masters, viz. On the 7th, William Mitchell, William Tibb, and George Lawson, all three from Riga for London; John Slade, for Liverpool; Stephen Bogman and Edward Austin, both for London, and all three from Stockholm; Matthew Crawford, from Koningburgh for Glasgow; Benjamin Chappell, for Hull, William Allison, for Plymouth, both from Petersburg; Henry Mayes, from Stockholm for Yarmouth; David Ogilvie, for Montrose, George Marlingall for Amsterdam, both from Riga; John Royal, from Dantzick for London; Andrew Breeding, from Stockholm for Bristol: On the 8th, William Watson, Joshua Haley, both from Dantzick for London; Richard Richmond, from Riga for ditto; Ralph Hytten, from Petersburg for Liban; William Coates, from Narva for London; David Fullerton for Montrose, John Finch for London, William Watson for Bristol, all three from Stockholm; Samuel Dewitt for Chatham, On the 9th, Thomas Jackson for London, and Paul Winston for Waterford, all three from Petersburg; Rayner Spray, from Koningburgh for Cork; Robert Raynes, from Petersburg for Hull; William Stock for London, John Green for Hull, and John Brook for Chester, all three from Petersburg; George Wright, from Narva for Hull; John Ford for Dublin, John Ross for Leith, both from Petersburg: On the 10th, Thomas Wheeler, Robert Arbuthnot, both from London for Dantzick; John Robinson, from Hamburg for Copenhagen.

Those Masters outward-bound are all sail'd from hence, the Wind at S. E. which continued till last Night, then it turn'd to N. W. Those for the Baltic are also sail'd.

HOME PORTS.

Dover, Sept. 10. Yesterday Morning pass'd by from the Westward, about two Miles off, a large Sloop. She look'd into the Downs, and then haled away to the Back of the Sands. Such a Vessel in these Seas, and her Behaviour, made her look very suspicious. Two arm'd Tenders that were in the Road are gone after her, and we hope will overtake her, tho' she was near two Leagues a head of them.

Dart, Sept. 10. Wind S. W. All the outward-bound Ships remain as per last. Came down since last Post and remain, the Theophylus, Goddard, for Venice; the Charlestown, Winter, for Topsham; and the Ann and Lucy, Leonard, for Meunibay.

Gravesend, Sept. 10. Pass'd by the Duke of Kingston, Merriton, from Bologne; and the Mary, Bowne, from Oporto.

Arrived, At Dover, the Syrian Waters, Vittrey, from Lisbon for Yarmouth.

L O N D O N.

Ten Men of War of 80 Guns, Nine of 70. Ten of 60, Four of 50, with Eight Fireships, are order'd immediately to the West Indies.

The John and Mary, Farrell, from Havre for Dublin, is lost near Yarmouth, the Crew and Cargo sav'd.

Sir

